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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Docket No: 1313/1E290-US2

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: James WESTPHAL; John P. ERSPAMER; Shiu-Kang Laurence LI

Serial No.: 09/719,338

Art Unit: 3761

Confirmation No.: 7143

Filed: January 17, 2001

Examiner: J. Webb

For: UNITARY ABSORBENT STRUCTURE CONTAINING SUPERABSORBENT POLYMER

PENDING CLAIMS

Hon. Commissioner of
Patents and Trademarks
Washington, DC 20231

February 27, 2003

Sir:

1. A unitary absorbent structure, comprising:
an upper fibrous layer having a liquid acquisition zone extending to one surface
and a liquid distribution zone extending to another surface;

a lower fibrous liquid storage layer in liquid communication with the distribution zone surface of said upper layer, said storage layer including superabsorbent polymer particles; and

a containment layer surrounding the storage layer and extending to outer edges of said structure, said containment layer containing fibers and superabsorbent polymer particles of said storage layer against a distribution zone surface of the upper layer, and wherein the containment layer is sealed to at least one edge of said upper fibrous layer.

2. The structure of claim 1 wherein said upper fibrous layer is airlaid and the acquisition zone has a lower density than the distribution zone.

3. The structure of claim 1 wherein said lower storage layer is an airfelt layer.

4. Cancelled.

5. The structure of claim 1 wherein said containment layer is sealed directly to the distribution zone surface of said upper layer.

6. The structure of claim 1 wherein said containment layer is sealed directly to the lower storage layer.

7. The structure of claim 1 wherein said containment layer is selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic film, nonwoven and woven tissue.

8. The structure of claim 1 wherein said containment layer comprises thermoplastic film selected from the group consisting of polyethylene and polypropylene.

9. The structure of claim 3 wherein said airfelt layer is lightly bonded.